network is a continuous and ongoing exercise. Every year as part of the Budget exercise works relating to New Lines, Gauge Conversion, Doubling, Traffic Facilities, etc. are sanctioned for improvement of the goods transport facilities as well as expansion of the physical rail network. During the 10th Plan (2002-07) it has been envisaged to add 1310 Kms. of New Lines, 2365 Kms. of Gauge Conversion and 1500 Kms. of Doubling for expansion of the Rail network. An Integrated Railway Modernization Plan (2005-2010) has been formulated for overall improvement in the facilities in the rail network including various measures to improve running of freight trains on Golden Quadrilateral and its diagonals, Throughput Enhancement Works and Terminal Facilities Works, Computerization of the Freight Operations, etc. This would also enable making the system more customer-friendly.

Railways have also envisaged construction of a Dedicated Freight Corridor along the Golden Quadrilateral & its diagonals and other high density routes, keeping in view the need for capacity augmentation and meeting the demands of the projected growth of freight traffic.

(c) and (d) In the Joint Declaration issued after the visit of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Japan to India in April 2005, Government of Japan has confirmed their intention to examine the feasibility of proposal for Dedicated Freight Corridors with the financial assistance from the Japanese Government. Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has been asked to undertake a feasibility study for Dedicated Freight Corridors on Delhi-Mumbai and Delhi-Kolkata routes.

Growth rate in the first quarter

625. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he has written to all General Managers regarding negative growth in the first quarter during the current year;

(b) if so, the growth rate for all sectors in the first quarter; and

(c) how the situtation is likely to be corrected?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The negative growth registered in the first quarter of the fiscal is under Sundry other earnings, which constitute only about 2%

of the Railways' traffic earnings. Total traffic earnings of the Railways in the first quarter have, however, registered a growth of 14.58% over the corresponding period of last year. General Managers have been addressed to take steps to reverse the trend under Sundry other earnings.

(b) Growth rates for all the segments of traffic earnings in the first quarter are as under:

(Rs. in cr.)

	To end of June, 2004	To end of June, 2005 (Approx.)	Growth over June, 2005
Passenger	3504.51	3808.59	8.68%
Other Coaching	216.90	263.20	21.35%
Goods	7091.34	8367.98	18.00%
Sundry earnings	199.84	178.32	-10.77%
TOTAL:	11012.59	12618.19	14.58%

(c) Zonal Railway administrations have, *inter-alia*, been urged to take necessary steps to increase earnings from commercial advertisement & publicity, catering, Subscriber Trunk Dialing (STD)/Public Call Office (PCO), parking, commercial utilization of land/buildings etc. which form part of Sundry earnings. Further improvement in performance in other areas is also being emphasized.

Railways package tours

626. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan to launch railway package tours for various places in Southern India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of railway package tours currently under operation by the railways;

(d) whether the railways have received any proposal in this regard from the Southern State Governments; and

(e) if so, the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)